

The Sensation of Bibimbap

I love cooking – not really a good cook though. Recently, I have been falling in love with Korean dishes called Bibimbap. What is so interesting with this Bibimbap? Well, when I see the Bibimbap, the colors of the vegetables, beef, eggs, and other savory ingredients delight my eyes, and lure my appetite. So, I think the harmonious colors and taste make Bibimbap one of the most popular Korean dishes in Indonesia.

It seems that the colors of the Bibimbap play a very important role. I believe that the colors of Korean food, the '*Obangsaek*' has made this Bibimbap very sensational. *Obangsaek* is the five cardinal colors which represent the five elements of the universe. The colors of white, black, green, red, and yellow not only attract the eyes but also have a very deep philosophical meaning for human beings. Only a few people of Indonesians realize the strength of colors in Korean dishes although in their culture, they also believe in two colors: red and white. Different from Korean belief, these two colors are an expression of Indonesian spirit. Therefore, the Indonesian National flag is red and white. These colors also play an important role in their food. Historically, the color, red, is similar to the color of Javanese sugar, while white is similar to the color of rice. In their traditional rituals such as the birth of babies and housewarmings, people will prepare and serve the guests with red and white porridge, so that they experience the harmony between red and white, revealing the unity of body and soul.

Similar to the philosophy of the harmony of body and soul, the five colors in Bibimbap represent the importance of harmony between nature and mankind. The five colors capture the energy of the universe and absorb it through the food. This is so amazing because when people eat it, they consume the energy of the universe. This is another deep sensation that people might not be aware when they eat Bibimbap.

I think because the Bibimbap uses rice, that becomes one of the reasons why Indonesian people who also eat rice everyday love Bibimbap. They do not realize that the white (*Baek*) of the rice represents purity and justice. But, what makes Bibimbap more interesting is the name itself. It is a combination of "bibim" which means mixture and "bap" which means rice, although I see that literally it can be interpreted as a mixture of rice, which is not. It is the construction of rice, vegetables, meat, and eggs, which is both nutritious and aesthetic.

What makes Bibimbap so alluring is the nutrition and value behind its delicacy. The quality of the diversity of the ingredient presents the nutritional benefits and their symbolic significance of human body. The use of natural ingredients make the food really healthy. Cooking Bibimbap never uses artificial ingredients. The green vegetables, lean meat and the seaweed or mushroom provide numerous nutrition. As according to Korean philosophy, the colorful blend of different foods and ingredients gives balance to the body. This balance is very essential for

human body, therefore, each of the five color-elements is incorporated in one single meal to manifest the balance. The color of red in the carrots symbolizes our heart, while the black of the mushroom represents our kidneys; the green of the vegetables represents our liver. The yellow color of the yolk stands for our stomach, while the white rice is the representative of our lungs. Well, what else can challenge the nourishment and the balance of Bibimbap?

Bibimbap also never comes in small size. That means it can be eaten by a number of people which I think shows that the food represents togetherness. People eat Bibimbap together. Togetherness is an important aspect of our life. It unites us and gives us a sense of belonging, and inspires us to love one another. Further, this also symbolizes a warm fellowship among the members of a family or friends. Isn't that beautiful? So, when eating Bibimbap the feeling of closeness and affection among the people goes together with the warmth and pleasure of the taste and sight of Bibimbap.

Talking about Bibimbap as well as eating it exactly allows us not only to visualize the elegance of the elements of the colorful ingredients but also to encounter the deep philosophical symbolization of its elements. The food does not offer the sensation alone, yet it leads to the belief of Korean values, especially the value of the harmony of human body and nature. Besides, the values of unity, friendship, and love mingle in one dazzling food. So, let's experience the great taste and the rich value of Bibimbap!